

J.K. Simmons (from page 1)

He had started to appear in regional theatre productions when Don and Judy Thomson of the Bigfork Summer Playhouse tapped him as music director and baritone for the lead in “Brigadoon.” And so began his tenure with the Bigfork Playhouse, where he was an actor, music director and director for several seasons.

The experience was formative for the young actor, he said in a 2002 interview with *Lively Times*. “It was hugely valuable and a great place to learn,” he says. “When you produce four musicals in repertory, among other things you really learn to be a team player.”

In a recent interview on Vulture.com, Simmons reflects on that juncture, when his life veered toward theatre. “I totally fell in love with the possibilities of acting, in a different way from standing in the crook of a piano singing Brahms,” he said. “Don’t get me wrong, though. If I had two lives going on, though, one of them would still be standing in the crook of a piano singing Brahms.”

The 87th Academy Awards ceremony will be held Feb. 22 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. You can bet J.K. Simmons will be in the audience and, his Montana fans hope, claiming an Oscar.

– Kristi Niemeyer



Miles Teller, left, as Andrew, and J.K. Simmons as Fletcher in “Whiplash.” (Daniel McFadden / Sony Pictures Classics)



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UM jazz fest pays tribute to “our Buddy”

This year’s Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival, March 26-27 at The University of Montana in Missoula, pays tribute to the jazz legend and festival namesake, “our Buddy,” who died Dec. 24. He was 91.

Lance Boyd, former director of the UM Jazz Program, describes the pioneering bebop clarinetist as “a jazz giant.”

Boyd hired DeFranco to perform at the UM Jazz Festival in 1998, and afterward, the artist and his friend, Mike Stockton, asked “if I would be interested in Buddy being permanently associated with the festival and using his name in the festival title. I responded very enthusiastically and said yes, if I could get the support of the university and its administration.”

The Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival debuted in April 2000, and according to Boyd, it was a very fertile alliance.

DeFranco and his wife, Joyce, had a summer home in Whitefish, so they would start their season at the festival in Missoula before migrating north.

“His legendary name attached to the jazz festival put The University of Montana on the ‘map’ in jazz circles around the world. The visibility and prestige from his association opened doors and created opportunities that would not otherwise have been available,” said Boyd.

“Having his name attached to the jazz festival made it possible to hire world-class artists that were eager to come to The University of Montana to perform with him and often for much less than their usual fees.”



Jazz giant Buddy DeFranco on stage at the annual Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival

Boyd also offered a brief synopsis of DeFranco’s career. “He became a legend playing bebop on the clarinet, an approach that was extremely unique during his formative years in the 30s and 40s since most jazz clarinetists in that time were playing swing, like Benny Goodman.

“Buddy was more comfortable performing with artists like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and wanted to play the kind of music they were playing. He wasn’t happy just playing ‘dance music.’ He wanted to be on the cutting edge of jazz as it was quickly advancing to the level of ‘high art’ in America.”

In addition to benefiting UM students, DeFranco’s annual appearance at the festival gave locals the opportunity to hear world-class jazz.

“It’s safe to say that in the 12-plus years he came back to perform in the jazz festival, he became an annual attraction that Missoulians came out to see and hear in great numbers,” said Boyd. “The warm and enthusiastic welcome he received every year was evidence of the fact that they embraced him as their own.” Even his son, Chad, played a role as sound engineer for the evening concerts, “so at one point during Buddy’s tenure, the whole DeFranco family was involved.”

“Jazz artists and jazz historians have already acknowledged his importance to the advancement of jazz clarinet. And as time passes, the world will also come to a greater appreciation,” predicts Boyd.

For tickets to this year’s tribute concerts to “our Buddy,” call 406-243-4581.

CONDOLENCES TO ...

The family and friends of experimental composer and sound artist **Dale Edwin Sherrard**. He died Jan. 14 in Missoula; he was 53 years old. Sherrard, a native of Ohio, moved to New York City in the early 1980s, where he immersed himself in the lively downtown arts scene, creating sound and performance art while moving in a wide circle of poets, artists and painters. He spent three years in Liege, Belgium, where he founded Groupe Des Artistes, and returned to New York in 1995, taking a job at Dresdner-Kleinwort-Wasserstein, where he worked for 12 years. While there, he completed a master of fine arts degree from Bard College’s Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts. His work and collaborations with sculptor Luca Buvoli were installed in the La Biennale di Venezia (2007), the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City, among other venues. His work was focused primarily on the use of human voice and text, and he was particularly interested in the subtleties of concise audio editing, multi-channel production, “guerrilla” field recording and audio sculpture. In 2007 Sherrard moved to Missoula, where he performed and worked on many films, presented numerous installations, happenings and sonic works, and taught in The University of Montana’s Media Arts program, where he founded and built a sonic arts sound lab. He worked with many artists, writers, dancers, and filmmakers over the years – both in New York and Montana – including Anya Cloud, Roger Hedden, John Pilson, Courtney Saunders, Andrew Smith, Tony Torn and Ken White, as well as with his wife, poet Prageeta Sharma. A deeply admired professor and dear friend to all, he was sought out for his inspiring pedagogy and deep engagement with artistic practices. “It’s



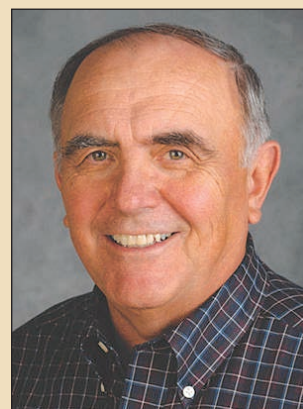
Dale Edwin Sherrard

not about the technology at all and it never was,” he said in a 2013 TEDx Talk. “It’s our need to share our sounds and our stories, and technology just supports that ... Eventually, we’re all going to hear each other. I’m going to hear what you hear, and you’re going to hear what I hear, and together we can celebrate the sounds of our lives. So listen up and listen well.”

– Excerpted from the *Missoulian*, Jan. 25

The friends and family of **John David Bailey**. He died Jan. 13 in Kalispell at age 71. Bailey was born Sept. 11, 1943, in Havre, and grew up in Eureka and Kalispell. He studied finance and music at The University of Montana, and was a cast member of a UM drama department production of “The Fantasticks,” which was performed at the Bigfork Summer Playhouse in 1963 and throughout eastern Asia that fall on a USO tour. He was awarded his Naval Flight Officer “Wings of Gold,” and was designated as a Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) during the Vietnam War. Although he spent most of his career in banking, he retained a lifelong love of music. He sang with the Great Falls Symphonic Choir, the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, the Montana Chorale, the Missoula Mendelssohn Club and the Missoula Symphony Chorale. Highlights included concerts at the Sydney Opera House in Australia and the Musikverein in Vienna, and performances in Austria, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Czech Republic, New Zealand, and for the United States Bicentennial celebration at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. He often shared his beautiful baritone voice, singing “Danny Boy” on many occasions. He was a founding director of Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls and also served on the board of directors of the Daly Mansion in Hamilton, where he lived for many years.

– From the *Ravalli Republic*, Jan. 17



John David Bailey

National Center for Creative Aging launches directory

The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) in Washington, DC, recently launched the Directory of Creative Aging Programs in America, available online at creativeaging.org/programs-people/cad.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, MetLife Foundation, and The Michelson Foundation, the directory features arts programs serving older people. It includes intergenerational activities in urban, suburban, and rural communities in a variety of settings such as community centers, senior centers, assisted living, adult day care, arts institutions, and libraries.

It is also searchable by an assortment of options such as: location, arts discipline, program setting, and adaptive design, with the goals of enabling older adults to find programs, encouraging arts and aging organizations to find partners, and helping teaching artists to find employment with organizations committed to creative aging in their communities.

To be included in the directory or for more information, email kfitzgerald@creativeaging.org.